

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: PROGRESS IN LISBON-AZORES RELATIONS

REF: (A) LISBON A-114; (B) PONTA DELGADA 0273; (C) LISBON A-113

SUMMARY: THE CENTRAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN A JUNE
2 MEETING MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN DEFINING A PLAN
FOR AUTONOMY. LISBON-PONTA DELGADA RELATIONS, ALWAYS FULL OF
UPS AND DOWNS, ARE ON THE UPSWING. END SUMMARY.

1. MEETING OF MINDS: AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERN-
MENT PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS
REGIONAL SECRETARIES FOR FINANCE, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE
AND INDUSTRY MET JUNE 2 IN LISBON WITH PRIME MINISTER
SOARES, DEFENSE MINISTER FIRMINO MIGUEL, MINISTER WITHOUT
PORTFOLIO ALMEIDA E SANTOS, MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC FOR
THE AZORES GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO, FINANCE MINISTER
CONSTANCIO, MINISTER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM PENA,
AGRICULTURE MINISTER SAIAS, AND TRADE MINISTER HORTA. THE
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--MEETINGS EXTREMELY POSITIVE: THE WORKING SESSIONS
DESIGNED TO CLARIFY THE CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY AND THE MEANS TO
PUT AUTONOMY INTO PRACTICE HAD EXTREMELY POSITIVE RESULTS.
--AGREEMENT ON CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY: THE CENTRAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENTS AGREED ON THE CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY ENABLING THE
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO PROPOSE SOME IMMEDIATE SOLUTIONS.
--NO PARTISAN INTERESTS: BOTH GOVERNMENTS STRESSED THE NEED

NOT TO ALLOW PARTY INTERESTS TO AFFECT RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM.

--NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING FOR AZORES: NATIONAL SENSITIVITY TO UNDERSTANDING AZOREAN PROBLEMS NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED.

--REINFORCE TOLERANCE IN AZORES: A CLIMATE OF DIALOGUE, POLITICAL TOLERANCE, AND CIVIL PEACE, WITH AN END TO ALL FORMS OF INTIMIDATION AND DISCRIMINATION, SHOULD BE REINFORCED IN THE AZORES.

--PROGRESS ON DECENTRALIZATION: AGREEMENT WAS REACHED TO TRANSFER SEVERAL "PERIPHERAL" SERVICES OF THE AGRICULTURE AND TRADE MINISTRIES TO THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.

2. MOTA AMARAL ENTHUSIASTIC: MUCH OF THE JUNE 2 SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO A DETAILED REVIEW OF THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S "PLAN FOR REALIZATION OF AUTONOMY" (REF A). MOTA AMARAL LABELLED THE JUNE 2 MEETING "EXTREMELY FRUITFUL, ESPECIALLY DUE TO THE SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE ON THE PART OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WHICH UNTIL NOW DID NOT EXIST." HE SAID THAT THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY WAS ACCEPTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER MINISTERS PRESENT, THUS ENABLING THE CENTRAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADDRESS AND RESOLVE TWO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING PERIPHERAL SERVICES. AMARAL SAID THE NEXT MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON JUNE 20 WILL ADDRESS OTHER DETAILED POINTS IN THE REGION'S AUTONOMY PLAN.

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3. COMMENT: RELATIONS BETWEEN LISBON AND THE AZORES HAVE IMPROVED SINCE THE POLEMICS GENERATED BY THE PHYSICAL ATTACK ON MINISTER ALMEIDA E SANTOS IN PONTA DELGADA LAST APRIL. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE HERE, NOTHING NEW HAS BEEN HEARD OF THE CASE OR THE FIVE MEN ARRESTED AND LATER RELEASED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ATTACK (REF B). INSTEAD THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, HAVING SUFFERED SOME DAMAGE TO ITS PRESTIGE FROM ITS HANDLING OF THE ALMEIDA SANTOS INCIDENT AND HAVING HEARD PRESIDENT EANES URGE RAPID PROGRESS ON AUTONOMY IN HIS APRIL 25 SPEECH, HAS MOVED TO STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (REF C). RELATIONS BETWEEN LISBON AND THE AZORES ARE FULL OF UPS AND DOWNS, BUT CURRENT TRENDS ARE POSITIVE.
BLOOMFIELD

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